



Category: Outstanding In-House Public Relations Team

Company: Loughborough University

Number of staff employed - including executive / support staff - and annual public relations budget, showing areas directly under the control of the in-house team:

Marketing and Advancement is a large and integrated team of over 161 (not full-time equivalent) that encompasses everything from Creative and Print Services (including van drivers, receptionists, and a parcels, post and a printing service!) to marketing, market research, policy and evaluation, recruitment, fundraising, events, digital, web, PR, internal communications, international, schools and colleges liaison, fundraising and engagement including the community, alumni and stakeholders. Overall, the team's total pay and non-pay is £12.39m but we are responsible for supporting income totally £164.23m – more than half the University's £300.8 million turnover.

We work collaboratively but as non-pay budgets are comparatively small (less than 1.5% of turnover) across all areas, we place PR and communications at the heart of what we do. Communications specific staff total 13 with a further 19 in web, digital, video, SEO, content and photography. There are three interns included in the team total and two staff on contracts relating to external income we bid for and secured via tenders won against PR consultancies. Our pay budget for these areas is £1.18m, non-pay is £390k.

Business objectives and analysis of team performance against budget over the past three years:

We deliver to the University strategy, Building Excellence, focused on integrated and effective student recruitment, strong reputation and profile, recruitment of the best academics, strong internal communications and development and fundraising activity. We have targets set against all areas of our work including income, recruitment, brand and media tracking and monitoring. We have achieved all our targets including recruitment growth/quality, widening participation/outreach, a year on year increase in PR coverage (23% in 2017), increases in our brand tracking and Net promoter scores, hitting fundraising targets and supporting sector leading academic recruitment.

We are now viewed as sector leaders in HE and have used our communications expertise to reinvent the way we fundraise, our events and our research promotion strategies including growing user generated content, advocacy and taking on a new CSR brief.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

Our strategy is to combine creativity and innovative communications with a solid foundation of data driven insight and emotional understanding. We do the detail and work out creative ways of achieving impact with no wasted resource. Our interdisciplinary team work hard to re-purpose, reuses and develop PR and content that is “evergreen” and has traction and we share learning across the team.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

We have developed a structured intern programme to grow talent and support succession planning linked to exposure around different areas of the team and as a result we have seen three of our recent interns move in to full time roles in the team in the past 12 months.

We speak and present regularly at conferences in our own sector and more widely and share our learning and case studies freely with others. This has included CIPR events, Public Sector and HE conferences, Youth Comms/Marketing events and Student Experience conferences.

We are corporate affiliate members of the CIPR and our Director is Chief Assessor for the CIPR’s Chartered Practitioner scheme. Several colleagues actively mentor others including the Director who mentors three young professionals including one on the Taylor Bennett Programme.

We share information widely and take part in events and sector training activities and support colleagues in personal awards such as PRCA Rising Star and PRCA Intern of the Year to help profile and CV development.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements:

Our work has been delivered to exceptional standards. We won over 30 international, national and regional awards in 2017 and have already brought home 11 different awards this year (2018), including two CIPR Excellence Awards. We’ve also grown as new functions have been moved to us based on our ability to deliver culture change and transformation to budget.

Recent major campaigns including our Health and Wellbeing Campaign (December – January) and our Gold Coast 2018 campaign (Commonwealth Games) achieved huge international cut-through in terms of media and online coverage and our media-hub (developed in-house) now hosts videos, files, images, jpegs, raw footage and content that is available 24/7, sparking huge increases in our syndicated coverage and facilitating use of our material embedded on social media and news sites.

A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:

We have consistently smashed our media, recruitment and income targets across the board including breaking the £2m barrier for philanthropic income (driven by communications) for

the first time in three years. This is a major achievement since the team was restructured and brought together from six different areas less than three years ago following a red risk audit. Loughborough is now seen as the team to beat in our sector and our recent Quadrennial Review underlined institutional confidence in our work. Our media impact is far in excess of our competitors (many of whom are Russell Group universities with large medical and law schools which Loughborough doesn't have) and in addition to winning the coveted HEIST Marketing Team of the Year in 2017 we were also PRCA DARE Midlands In-House Team of the Year. We are currently short-listed for the Times Higher Outstanding Marketing Communications Team (tba June 21 2018).

A campaign which we are particularly proud of is #Spit Happens which broke the national record for the most stem cell donors signing up in one day – 2,056 – via a creative internal, social and PR campaign. This secured funding for the team to run another event – this Valentine's Day, training over 1400 staff on life saving CPR – and has positioned us as leaders in CSR for the University. #Spit Happens has won eleven different awards on a shoestring budget of less than £3,000 and plays testimony to the ingenuity, passion and consummate professionalism of the Loughborough team in galvanising our entire community through the very best communications in our sector.